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RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 2353
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SUBJECT: NEPAL'S CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY ELECTION: MAOISTS
LEADING IN EARLY RESULTS

REF: KATHMANDU 398

Summary

11. (SBU) Based on initial results from Nepal's April 10 Constituent Assembly election, the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) is dominating the contest for the 601-member Assembly's 240 first-past-the-post seats. As of noon, April 13, the Maoists had won 37 of the 64 seats where winners have been declared. The Communist Party of Nepal - United Marxist Leninist (UML) is second with 11 seats. Prime Minister G.P. Koirala's Nepali Congress (NC) is third with 9 seats. Two Madhesi parties and two minor left parties have placed first in the remaining 7 declared races. Senior Maoist leaders have won countrywide. Their UML and NC counterparts have not been so fortunate. Final results will take time.

Maoists Dominant in Early Returns

12. (SBU) To the huge surprise of the Nepali media, the mainstream parties and nearly all Nepal watchers domestic and foreign, the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) has established a large lead in Nepal's April 10 Constituent Assembly (CA) election. As of noon, April 13, in the contest for the 601-member Assembly's 240 first-past-the-post seats, the Maoists had won 37 races. This is out a total of 64 contests where the Election Commission has declared a winner.

(Note: An additional 335 seats will be awarded to parties based on how many votes that party received on a separate proportional representation or PR ballot. The post-election cabinet will appoint the remaining 26 CA members. End Note.)

The Communist Party of Nepal - United Marxist Leninist (UML) is currently second with 11 seats. Prime Minister G.P.Koirala's Nepali Congress is third with 9 seats. The Madhesi People's Rights Forum (MPRF) has won three races. The Terai-Madhes Democratic Party has won one. Two minor left parties -- the Nepal Workers and Peasants Party and the People's Front Nepal -- have won two seats and one seat, respectively.

Major Winners

13. (SBU) a. Maoists:

-- Maoist chief Pushpa Kamal Dahal (aka Prachanda) in Kathmandu-10 and Rolpa-2
-- Maoist no. 2 Baburam Bhattarai in Gorkha-2
-- Minister of Information Krishna Mahara in Dang-3
-- Minister of Local Development Dev Gurung in Manang
-- Minister of Physical Planning Hsila Yami in Kathmandu-7
-- Minister of Women and Children Pampa Bhusal in Lalitpur-3

b. UML

-- Interim Parliament Speaker Subash Nemwang in Ilam-2

c. NC

-- Minister of Peace and Reconstruction Ram Chandra Poudel in Tanahu-2

d. MPRF

-- MPRF chief Upendra Yadav in Sunsari-5

Major Losers

14. (SBU) a. Maoists: N/A (Note: No major leaders have lost so far. End Note)

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b. UML

-- General Secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal lost in Kathmandu-2 (to a Maoist)

c. NC

-- Acting Party President Sushil Koirala in Banke-3 (to an MPRF candidate)
-- Minister without Portfolio Sujata Koirala in Sunsari 5 (to Upendra Yadav)

Final Results To Take Time

15. (SBU) As of midday on April 13, Nepal's Election Commission had only announced the final results for a little over a quarter of the CA's 240 first-past-the-post (FPTP) races. It will likely be several days until we know the results of the rest of the FPTP races that are not challenged. Counting the proportional representation ballots will take time as well. On top of that, the Election Commission announced April 12 that it intended to hold re-polls in 75 polling centers (out of roughly 21,000 centers) scattered across 12 constituencies. At least one by-election (in the constituency of Prachanda's choosing) and an election in Surket-1 where the polls were not held on April 10 because the UML candidate was murdered April 8 will further delay the outcome.

Comment

16. (SBU) Only partial results are available at this time from Nepal's April 10 Constituent Assembly election. Although the Nepali media have focused on the first-past-the post races, a much larger share of the Assembly will be made up of members who were elected through the proportional representation (PR) system (335 vs. 240). At present we know nothing about the result of the PR vote. It could be two weeks -- or more -- before we have a fuller picture. Nevertheless, the election has already had political consequences. On April 12, M.K.

Nepal, who has served as General Secretary (head) of the UML since 1993, submitted his resignation to the UML Central Committee. His resignation is expected to be accepted once the results are final. Sushil Koirala, who is the third-ranking member of the NC's leadership -- after Prime Minister G.P. Koirala and former PM Sher Bahadur Deuba -- also submitted his resignation. We expect they will not be the last political heavyweights to fall in this unpredictable election.

POWELL